

Big Plus Mikel Arteta has taken Arsenal to "another level" and laid on two goals in the League win against Kairat

New reality

Follow the rules. This week, the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (Fufa) extended the deadline for football academy registration to February 13, 2026, as part of efforts to professionalize youth football development in Uganda, in accordance with Statutory Instrument (SI) 24 of 2025. Fufa encouraged all stakeholders to submit required documents online. However, it's not as easy as ABC. Academies that pass inspection will be recommended to the National Council of Sports for licensing, as per SI 24 of 2025, Part IX, Regulation 29(2). The angel and devil lies in the details.

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Andrew
Bugonzi
of Genesis
Football
Academy in
Mukono.



A new reality for academies

Digital. Fufa is encouraging academies to submit all documents, including UYFA membership certificates and lists of players and coaches, through its online system, a move meant to make the process more accessible and reduce the need for frequent physical visits to Mengo.

BY GEORGE KATONGOLE

Running a football academy in Uganda is no longer just about coaching and developing talent. Under new Fufa regulations, even modest, community-based academies face costs exceeding Shs3.5m, putting pressure on programmes where most players are accommodated for free.

For mid-size academies, costs rise to Shs6 to 8 million, while elite programmes may require upwards of Shs9m.

These amounts cover licensing fees to the National Council of Sports (NCS) and Fufa, membership to the Uganda Youth Football Association (UYFA), registration of players and coaches, and compliance with inspection and safeguarding requirements. Operational costs such as equipment, pitches, transport and coaching salaries are additional.

The reforms, anchored in the National Sports Act, 2023 and FUFA's Football Academies Regulations, 2025, make registration and licensing mandatory for all academies in line with national legislation that requires any person intending to operate a sports academy to be licensed by the NCS upon recommendation by the federation.

Previously registered academies have been deregistered and must re-

apply under the new framework. At the centre of the changes is a two-year renewable licence, with informal operations no longer accepted and routine inspections determining whether academies meet the required standards.

Extended registration deadline

The football academy registration window has been extended to February 13, 2026 as part of efforts to professionalise youth football development in accordance with statutory instrument 24 of 2025.

Fufa is encouraging academies to submit all documents, including UYFA membership certificates and lists of players and coaches, through its online system, a move meant to make the process more accessible and reduce the need for frequent physical visits to headquarters. Academies that pass inspection on February 14, 2026 will be recommended to the NCS for licensing, and certificates are scheduled to be issued on March 13, 2026.

Standards and grading system

Football Development Director Bashir Mutyaba said the federation established a technical panel to inspect academies and ensure compliance, bringing together specialists to look at infrastructure, governance, coaching standards, safeguarding policies and administration.

"Fufa found it necessary to come up with an expert's panel, a group of specialists that will be in charge of inspecting the academies. It

will look at the different criteria that academies must fulfil and ensure that only qualifying academies are assessed, evaluated and recommended," Mutyaba said.

The regulations also introduce a graded classification system from A to D, intended to separate elite academies from loosely run setups while offering a roadmap for improvement. By requiring strategic plans, full-time administration and minimum operational structures, the federation says the grading will help raise standards nationwide.

WHAT IT COSTS TO RUN AN ACADEMY

NCS Fees

Shs1m - Licence application
Shs2m - Operating licence
Shs0.5m - Licence renewal
Shs1m - Renewal fee

Fufa Fees

Shs2m - Grade A academy
Shs1m - Grade B academy
Shs0.5m - Grade C
Shs0.2m - Grade D

Other costs

UYFA membership
Player and coach registration
Inspections and safeguarding

Fufa says the reforms aren't only about compliance. The federation has outlined that registered academies could benefit from a unified curriculum that is being finalised, participation in standardised competitions, capacity-building opportunities, official recognition and recommendations for travel or equipment support. These are designed to help academies develop beyond licensing alone.

Concerns from smaller operators

Despite these assurances, grassroots operators remain concerned about the financial and administrative burden. Proline director Mujib Kasule questioned the broader vision behind the reforms.

"It is the spirit of the law that we question. Fufa and the government have no serious programme for sustainable youth football development. Individuals go out of their way to grow the game, and now you just want to take from them without clearly defined benefits?" he said.

Kasule also raised concerns about what he described as "double registration," noting that Proline's academy was already registered through existing systems before the new requirements.

"Show us a pathway. If I comply, what do I gain? If I register, how do I benefit?" he said.

Patrick Gwayambadde of Excel Soccer Academy said some operators might have to rethink how they structure their programmes.

"At the end of the day, this is about the parents. I run my programmes in schools. I could simply stop calling it an academy and avoid all this," he told Saturday Monitor in a recent interview.

Panel of experts

Ronnie Kalema Ronnie (chairman), Ronald Barente (vice chairman), Abbey Donaca Ssentongo, Shafic Kigongo, Ayub Khalifan Kiyingi, Emmanuel Kasakya, Salma Otika Kairungi



Teaching. Youth coach Nimrod Kintu talks to players of Genesis Football Academy in Mukono. The new regulations aimed at professionalising will adversely affect grassroots academy. PHOTOS/COURTESY

